

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on March 12, 2004 has been reviewed and carefully considered.

Claims 1-3, 7-9, 11-13, and 17-19 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Geiser, U.S. Patent No. 5,059,965. Claims 4, 5, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geiser in view of Matthews, U.S. Patent No. 5,677,708. Claims 6, 10, 16, and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geiser. Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 11 are the only independent claims. In view of the following Remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the aforementioned rejections are respectfully requested.

Before discussing the cited prior art and the Examiner's rejections of the claims in view of that art, it would be appropriate to present a brief summary of applicants' claimed invention. The invention allows a user to navigate through a hierarchical structure by displaying information as to where the user is currently located in the hierarchical structure. The hierarchical structure includes a plurality of information entries organized into a plurality of groups (claim 1, lines 3-4 and 9-10; claim 11, lines 1-4 and 9-10; see also page 4, paragraph 7, lines 1-6 of applicants' disclosure). At least one group includes a sublevel of subgroups (claim 1, line 4; claim 11, lines 3-4). A scrollable cross-point navigation image is displayed in the form of two bars of panels with a common focus panel, each of the panels being linked to and identifying an information entry, a group, or a subgroup (claim 1, lines 5-8; claim 11, lines 5-8; see also page 4, paragraph 9, lines 1-7). The focus panel displays the user's current lowest level in the hierarchical structure, along with a successively higher hierarchical level, if any (claim 1, lines 9-10; claim 11, lines 9-10). Levels in the hierarchy that are higher than that displayed on the focus panel, if any, are identified in succeeding adjoining panels of a first of the two bars. Other panels of the first bar identify the highest level groups in the

hierarchy (claim 1, lines 11-13; claim 11, lines 11-13). Panels on the second of the two bars identify information entries (if any), groups (if any), or subgroups (if any) of the same level in the hierarchy as the currently selectable lowest level in the hierarchy identified in the focus panel (claim 1, lines 14-16; claim 11, lines 14-16).

A. Claim Rejections under 35 USC 102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 7-9, 11-13, and 17-19 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Geiser, U.S. Patent No. 5,059,965. Geiser discloses a technique for selecting an alphabetic destination name by using a two-dimensional input element (col. 1, lines 55-68; col. 2, lines 43-45). A vertical component of the two-dimensional input element is used to scroll through various letters of the alphabet until a desired letter is selected (col. 2, lines 43-45 and 54-57). The two-dimensional input element is provided in the form of two mutually orthogonal bars (FIGs. 1A-1C). A horizontal bar of the two-dimensional input element is used to scroll through various letter positions from left to right within a word, so as to enable selection of a desired letter position (col. 2, lines 49-54). The name of a destination is spelled out by using a vertical bar of the two-dimensional input element to select an individual letter of the alphabet for each of a plurality of letter positions determined by the horizontal bar. Thus, Geiser utilizes two mutually orthogonal bars to select specific letters and letter positions within a word.

Geiser neither discloses nor suggests navigation through a hierarchical structure of information. More specifically, Geiser does not disclose or suggest applicants' claimed limitation as set forth in claim 1 which calls for "organizing a plurality of information entries into a hierarchy comprising a plurality of groups, at least one of which groups having at least one sublevel of subgroups" (claim 1, lines 3-4). Claim 11 contain an analogous limitation specifying "a database

storing a plurality of information entries in a hierarchy comprising a plurality of groups, at least one of which groups having at least one sublevel of subgroups" (claim 11, lines 3-4) Geiser provides only one hierarchical level -- namely, letters, and does not disclose use of subgroups. Moreover, the claimed invention as set forth in claims 1 and 11 uses a focus panel that "identifies (a) a currently selectable lowest level in the hierarchy and (b) the next higher level" (claim 1, lines 9-10; claim 11, lines 9-10). Geiser includes no focus panel for identifying a lowest hierarchical level and a next hierarchical level. The focus panel in applicants' claimed invention allows a user to navigate through a hierarchical structure by displaying information as to where the user is currently located in the hierarchical structure.

A further distinguishing feature of applicants' claimed invention is that successive adjoining panels on a first bar are used to identify levels higher than that displayed in the focus panel. Refer to lines 11-13 of claim 1 and lines 11-13 of claim 11 which provide that "levels...in the hierarchy higher than that displayed in the focus panel are identified in succeeding adjoining panels of a first of the two bars." Geiser includes no limitation directed to displaying higher hierarchical levels on adjoining panels of a first bar.

A still further distinguishing feature of applicants' claimed invention is that panels on a second bar are used to identify information entries, groups, or subgroups of the same level in the hierarchy as the currently selectable lowest level identified in the focus panel. Refer to lines 14-16 of claim 1 and lines 14-16 of claim 11 which provide that "panels of the second of the two bars each identify one of (a) information entries, if any, (b) groups, if any, and (c) subgroups, if any, of the same level in the hierarchy as the currently selectable lowest level in the hierarchy identified in the focus panel". Geiser includes no limitation directed to a second bar that identifies one of

information entries, groups, or subgroups at the lowest hierarchical level which is currently selectable at the focus panel.

To summarize, claims 1 and 11 are neither anticipated by, nor rendered obvious in view of, Geiser. Geiser neither discloses nor suggests navigation through a hierarchical structure of information. Geiser provides only one hierarchical level -- namely, letters. Geiser does not disclose use of subgroups. Geiser includes no focus panel for identifying a lowest hierarchical level and a next hierarchical level. Geiser includes no limitation directed to displaying higher hierarchical levels on adjoining panels of a first bar. Additionally, Geiser includes no limitation directed to a second bar that identifies one of information entries, groups, or subgroups at the lowest hierarchical level which is currently selectable at the focus panel.

Since claim 2 depends from independent claim 1 and claim 12 depends from independent claim 11, it is submitted that claims 2 and 12 are patentable over Geiser for the reasons set forth above in connection with claims 1 and 11. Moreover, with respect to claims 2 and 12, the Examiner noted that Geiser describes "two bars...sized and positioned on the display so as to permit viewing of a substantial portion of a background image presented on the display". Actually, Geiser is directed to a navigational system which provides a minimal distracting effect such that it can be used while driving (col. 1, lines 55-58). The driver is able to focus on driving without looking at the display of the navigational system because the system provides a vocal output (col. 2, lines 26-30). Geiser does not display a user interface on a windscreen. By contrast, applicants' invention as set forth in claims 2 and 12 provides a display with a user interface of two bars and a background image. The two bars are positioned so that they will not disturb the background image. Accordingly, claims 2 and 12 are neither anticipated by, nor rendered obvious in view of, Geiser.

Since claim 7 depends from independent claim 1 and claim 17 depends from independent claim 11, it is submitted that claims 7 and 17 are patentable over Geiser for the reasons set forth above in connection with claims 1 and 11. Moreover, the Examiner incorrectly alleged that Geiser describes a feature set forth in claims 7 and 17 which provides that "upon entry by the user on an input device of a selecting command, the electronic device performs an action corresponding to an information entry identified in the focus panel". As stated above, Geiser does not include a focus panel formed by an intersection of two panels. Thus, claims 7 and 17 are patentable over Geiser.

Since claims 3, 8, and 9 depend from independent claim 1 and claims 13, 17, and 18 depend from independent claim 11, it is submitted that claims 3, 8, 9, 13, 17, and 18 are patentable over Geiser for the reasons set forth above in connection with independent claims 1 and 11.

B. Claim Rejections under 35 USC 103(a)

The Examiner rejected dependent claims 4, 5, 14, and 15 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Geiser in view of Matthews, U.S. Patent No. 5,677,708. The Examiner noted that Geiser fails to teach applicants' claimed methods and devices wherein each of the two bars are positioned on the display to be proximate to and parallel to an edge of the display. Accordingly, the Examiner cited Matthews as allegedly disclosing methods of displaying control objects on a display proximate to an edge of a display. Matthews discloses a system for displaying a list of items on a television display screen (col. 4, lines 31-34). The system is designed to overcome the limited viewing area of television screen (col. 2, line 63- col. 3, line 11) by partially displaying list items at the borders of the screen (col. 4, lines 31-42; see also FIG. 5). Referring to col. 13, lines 22-37, Matthews "displays a list in a control object on the display screen of a conventional television set, as shown in FIGs. 4-10. The display of video signals on conventional television sets is not guaranteed but is variable. The 'safe title' zone includes the center 80% of the television screen and the 'safe

'action' zone includes the center 90% of the television screen. This is shown in FIG. 4, which is not drawn to scale. The video signal to be displayed on the television display screen 130 is not guaranteed to be displayed in its entirety. The 'safe title' zone 132 and 'safe action' zone 134 are the areas of the display screen in which certain displays can be essentially guaranteed. Thus, in areas of the display screen 130 between the 'safe title' zone 132 and the outer border of the display screen, video signals intended to be displayed cannot be guaranteed." Accordingly, Matthews describes a system wherein a user interface is displayed substantially in the middle of the display area, within the 'safe title' zone 132 and the 'safe action' zone 134.

The Examiner has presented no incentive as to why a person of ordinary skill in the pertinent art would be motivated to combine the teachings of Geiser and Matthews. Geiser and Matthews are drawn from two completely disparate areas of prior art: automobile navigation systems and cable television. Through the use of a mutually orthogonal manual selection device, Geiser overcomes the problem of selecting an alphabetical destination name while driving. This selection device is employed in the context of vehicular applications. In contrast to the Geiser device, Matthews overcomes the problem of a limited display area on a television screen by displaying portions of control objects at the periphery of the screen. Thus, Matthews and Geiser are drawn from two totally unrelated fields. A person of ordinary skill seeking to improve television displays would have no incentive to consider the automobile-oriented selection device of Geiser. Skilled artisans seeking to improve the ergonomic design of automobile navigation systems would have no incentive to consider a reference drawn from the field of cable television, such as Matthews. Accordingly, the Examiner's rejection of dependent claims 4, 5, 14, and 15 is based on an improper combination of references and should be withdrawn.

Even if the teachings of Geiser and Matthews are combined, the resulting combination fails to meet the claimed invention. Geiser teaches the display of two mutually orthogonal bars, whereas Matthews teaches the display of partial control objects at the periphery of a television screen. Combining the teachings of Matthews and Geiser results in a display of two mutually orthogonal bars wherein a portion of one of the bars is shown at the periphery of a television screen. Neither reference suggests or teaches a focus panel formed at the intersection of the two bars. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 14 and 15 are not obvious in view of the combination of Geiser and Matthews.

Dependent claims 6, 10, 16, and 20 depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1 or independent claim 11. It is submitted that claims 6, 10, 16, and 20 are not obvious in view of Geiser for the reasons set forth above in connection with claims 1 and 11.

C. Summary

In view of the foregoing considerations, it is submitted that claims 1-20 are allowable over the prior art of record, and such action by the Examiner is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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